Symbolic Places in D. H. Lawrence's *England, My England* and *The Border Line*

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Abstract: *Starting from several remarks on the notions of* space *and* place *and on the way in which they appear in literature in general and in D. H. Lawrence's works in particular, the paper analyses the places where the action of the two short stories unfolds and their symbolic significance, since it is obvious that both in* England, My England *and in* The Border Line *the setting acquires both a real and a figurative dimension. In the former short story, the characters begin in a place that is similar to a Garden of Eden, then move to the city, only to return occasionally to what seems to be their lost paradise, while in the latter we are dealing with a larger territory that displays characteristics of a Nether World. The analysis of the texts will concentrate on the passages where the respective places are described, revealing major symbolic elements that appear in the descriptions, as well as the importance assigned to death, which is both denoted and connoted, especially in the second short story. The conclusions will parallel the texts with the ideas expressed by D. H. Lawrence in* The Spirit of Place.

Keywords: *place; Garden of Eden; Nether World; death; symbol; spirit of place;*

Introduction. Space and place in literature, in dictionaries, in D. H. Lawrence's works

As Tom Henighan notices, the type of natural space presented in modern literature reflects the evolution of the human being. At first, the people lived in wild nature, where they had to survive the struggle for existence. Then, they came to master nature and to transform it, in the beginning through agriculture, then through the cities they built, which came to dominate the planet. Consequently, in literature too, "Man is shown in wild nature, in the field, and entering the urban world" (Henighan 6), as it happened in real life.

> To apply the cycle to a different frame of reference, certain writers, like D. H. Lawrence, for example, sum up the same stages in their total work: we begin in a specific region, often linked to the field, move inexorably toward the city, sometimes to be carried onward into new dimensions of wild nature, where space is sought in time, and

> myth invoked to counter the limitations of the urban end-point. (Henighan 6)

This movement is exemplified by the two short stories under analysis. The characters in *England, My England* begin in a place that is similar to a Garden of Eden, then move to the city, only to return occasionally to what seems to be their lost paradise. Those in *The Border Line* travel through and towards a different kind of territory displaying characteristics of a Nether World, regardless of whether it is a natural place or a city.

Space and place in D.H. Lawrence's works have been dealt with before, critics focusing however especially on the author's novels and less extensively on his short stories. Stefania Michelucci, for instance, explores places in *The White Peacock*, *The Prussian Officer*, *The Trespasser*, *Sons and Lovers*, *The Lost Girl*, *Aaron's Rod*, *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love*, *The Woman Who Rode Away*, *The Princess* and *The Plumed Serpent* (2002), while Tom Henighan refers to Lawrence's early novels, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* (1982).

A distinction has been made, both by dictionaries and by researchers, between the notion of *space* and that of *place*. *The Cambridge Dictionary*, for example, defines *space* as "an empty area that is available to be used" (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/space) and *place* as "an area, town, building, etc.; a home; a suitable area, building, situation or occasion" (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/place). According to Michelucci, unlike space, place is known and controllable, and the way in which it is organized by a community illustrates that community's view on the world. In her opinion, in literary works, places communicate among themselves in such a way as we may think of them as a spatial *langue* (in Saussurean terms). When this spatial *langue* is appropriated by the writer, it becomes a *parole*. For the characters, it is also, in turns, *langue* and *parole*: "places serve as objective reference points for all of the characters, but they are interpreted and represented in personal ways by each character" (Michelucci 4).

In both short stories under discussion, we are dealing with real places, that can be found on the map, but that acquire a symbolic meaning. In *England, My England* these places are Crockham Cottage, a farm located in Hampshire, near the South Downs, London, and the place in Flanders where the main character Egbert dies. In *The Border Line* we see the main character Katherine Farquhar going from Paris to Baden-Baden through the Marne Country, Soissons, Nancy, Strasburg, Kehl, Appenweier, Steinbach and Oos. Some of these places – Soissons, Nancy, Kehl, Appenweier and Steinbach – are only mentioned by name. Others like Paris, the Marne Country, Strasburg, Baden-Baden play a more important role in the story. Two other places that are worth

mentioning though they are not towns or countries are the boat and the train by which Katherine travels.

***England, My England* and *The Border Line*. Publication, relationship with Lawrence's biography, short presentation**

Both short stories trace back to their author's biography. *England, My England* was written in 1915 and appeared in the *English Review* in October the same year. This first version differs extensively from the final one that was included in the eponymous short story collection, published in 1922. The plot is the same, but the male character has a different name. In addition to that, the pre-war part of the story was expanded, while the account of the protagonist's experience in the army and on the battlefield was reduced and changed. Lawrence had left the war behind, since the story was revised in Taormina, in late 1921. Lawrence himself admitted it was a story about the Lucases, the sister and brother-in-law (and their children) of a fellow writer, Viola Meynell, who invited the Lawrences to live in her cottage in the village of Greatham, back in 1915, after the beginning of World War I. Madeline and Perceval Lucas were seen by the writer as representative of the married couples of the war, a period when men went to the front and their wives remained at home (*cf.* Cushman 2015).

> Lawrence's use of the Lucases strikingly exemplifies Lawrence's habitual practice of putting fictional versions of friends and acquaintances into his novels and stories, often to their understandable displeasure. (Cushman paragraph 9)

Among them, John Middleton Murry figures rather prominently, having been the source of Marchbanks in *The Last Laugh*, Matthew in *Smile*, Jimmy Frith in *Jimmy and the Desperate Woman*, but also of Philip Farquhar in *The Border Line*. *The Border Line* was written in 1924. Lawrence began it in Europe, where he came from Mexico in order to join Frieda who had come here the previous year to see her children, and continued writing it while in New York. He probably started it after they went by train from Paris to Baden-Baden via Strasburg. The short story was published in September 1924 both in the English *Hutchinson's Story Magazine* and in the American *Smart Set*, but was endowed with a new ending in 1928, when Lawrence corrected the proofs for the book collection *The Woman who Rode Away and Other Stories* in which it was included. Its author's annoyance with Murry arose partly from jealousy, as he suspected Frieda of having had an affair with Murry between August and November 1923, when she was in Europe without him, and partly from disagreements with the other writer's views. Cushman, however, contends that

such characters, based on real figures, are actually alternate versions of Lawrence.

> He noticed (or imagined) characteristics of someone he knew that reminded him of personal qualities or tendencies that he disliked in himself. These became the basis of a character in which Lawrence could try out and explore the characteristics in question – and in the process unconsciously validate his own identity as someone who was *not* like that. (Cushman paragraph 37)

Both short stories feature a love triangle, with the observation that both triangles are quite uncommon. In *England, My England* we are dealing with a woman, her husband and her father, with the father being the dominant character, a patriarchal symbol and a well-intentioned tyrant (*cf.* Feyel 2015). It is he rather than the husband that stands in the landscape of the wife's life "like a tower of great strength, like a great pillar of significance" (Lawrence 12). The image makes us think of an axis mundi, and indeed Godfrey Marshall is the centre of his daughter's world, supporting her not just financially, but also emotionally, in a way in which his son-in-law, who should actually be the one to do it, cannot, even though he loves her and their children. In *The Border Line* the triangle is made of a woman, and her first and second husbands. The strange element is that the first husband is dead, but it is he rather than the second, living one that is real and dominant.

Both short stories refer to World War I, *England, My England* being set before and during it, and *The Border Line* in its aftermath.

Symbolic places in *England, My England*. Crockham Cottage as a Garden of Eden. The house, the garden, the flowers, the snakes. Winifred and Egbert as a primordial couple

England, My England begins rather abruptly with a *he* working on the edge of the common, trying to 'tame' the land by "carrying the garden path in continuation from the plank bridge on to the common" (Lawrence 5) and having some difficulty because he cannot get the path straight. Little by little we are disclosed the name and location of the place where he is doing this, as well as his own name and background. And we are given descriptions of both.

The place is Crockham Cottage, an "old and forgotten" property that seems to belong "to the old England of hamlets and yeomen" (Lawrence 6). It actually belonged to Godfrey Marshall, a man who came from the north poor and became moderately rich, and who gave it as a marriage portion to his daughter Winifred when she married Egbert.

The idea that the place is isolated, and full of flowers and snakes is stated repeatedly.

Thus, though Marshall lives in the centre of the village – a figurative if not literal centre, his house being not far from the church – and his other two daughters' houses are near his, Winifred's cottage is much farther away.

> And then away beyond the lawns and rose-trees of the house-garden went the track across a shaggy, wild grass space, towards the ridge of tall black pines that grew on a dyke-bank, through the pines and above the sloping little bog, under the wide, desolate oak trees, till there was Winifred's cottage crouching unexpectedly in front, so much alone, and so primitive. (Lawrence 6-7)

The house is ancient and uncomfortable, silent and dark, like an "old den" (Lawrence 8), a lair filled with the physical desire of the by-gone generations of yeomen that had inhabited it, lusting and breeding there for generations. It had low, little windows, thick, timbered walls and a big black chimney place, and was imbued with a sense of secrecy. Its new owners did not want to change it and it seemed to have cast a spell on them, changing them, lending them its own quality.

After Egbert and Winifred got married and moved to Crockham Cottage, he filled the place with flowers, because the house came with a garden. There are two things we can notice in connection to the two. The first is that they appear to be in opposition to one another, the house being dark and the garden being sunny, though savage. The second is that the man tries hard to tame nature but leaves the house as it is. In this effort to beautify the garden, we can include his attempt at prolonging the path with which the short story begins, but also previous attempts at making paths, levelling the soil, making terraces and filling the garden with flowers. This last preoccupation has materialized in a "vividness of flamy vegetation" (Lawrence 5). The place is full of "purple and white columbines, great oriental red poppies with their black chaps and mulleins tall and yellow" (Lawrence 5). The word *flame* is repeated several times in the description of the garden, which is a "flamy garden" (Lawrence 5) that Egbert has made "flame with flowers" (Lawrence 6). It seems to refer also to the flame, i.e. the passion that exists between the two spouses.

The antithesis between the beauty of this piece of land and the savageness of its surroundings is also repeatedly stated. The surroundings are snake-infested, marshy, shaggy, displaying "fierce seclusion amid the savage peace of the commons" (Lawrence 5). It is not a place in which all creatures live in harmony, but one which is the setting for a fight in which only the fittest survive. Snakes are a constant presence in the garden, and one day, rather early in their married life, Winifred heard the strange cry of a frog trying to escape from the mouth of a snake, "the strangest scream, like the very soul of the dark

past crying aloud" (Lawrence 8). She frightened the snake away and it released the frog, so things ended happily, but that was probably only an exception.

If the garden of Crockham Cottage is reminiscent of a Garden of Eden, a piece of Heaven in the middle of nowhere, isolated and still preserving the spirit of "savage England", of the territory that the Saxons found when they came "so long ago" (Lawrence 5), Egbert and Winifred themselves are similar to the primordial couple. They live in an atemporal place, in which the spirit of yore still lingers and which has not been touched by modernity, but a place which they are trying to civilize. The fact that in the beginning of the short story the male character has no name, being designated only by the personal pronoun *he*, adds to the impression of impersonality and atemporality. *He* is like a god trying to bring order to the chaos.

The couple gradually acquire the quality of the place. They lose touch with the world of contemporary England. She "seemed to come out of the old England" (Lawrence 6), while he looked like an English archer. Anyway, he has always been passionate about the ways of the past: old folk-music, folk dances, old customs. Moreover, the two are frequently compared with elements of nature, e.g. Winifred is said to have a "hawthorn robustness" and to move "with a slow grace of energy like a blossoming, red-flowered bush in motion" (Lawrence 6), while Egbert is considered "a born rose" (Lawrence 7).

If we are to refer to the symbolism of this place and of the elements present in it, we have to say, first of all, that the garden is a symbol of culture as opposed to wild nature, of rational thought as opposed to disorder, of consciousness as opposed to the unconscious (*cf.* Chevalier, Gheerbrant, vol. 2). The organized garden that the couple are trying to create stands for the power of the human being, especially the power exerted on the tamed nature. Their attempts at bringing order to it may also signify their desire to bring order to their own lives.

Secondly, accompanying the garden, the house is a feminine symbol, the centre of the world and the image of the universe, but also of the inner being. It should provide shelter and protection (*cf.* Chevalier, Gheerbrant, vol. 1). In our case, however, it is presented not so much like a haven as like a place that connotes instinctuality. The people inhabiting it seem to have been imbued with its spirit and at least for a while live there isolated from the world and dominated by their instincts.

Thirdly, flowers symbolize the passive principle, but also the love and harmony characteristic of primordial nature. They stand for childhood and the Edenic state, as well as for the instability that is essential to and helps the human being evolve (*cf.* Chevalier, Gheerbrant, vol. 2). Egbert is more preoccupied with flowers than his wife. He is the more passive member of the couple, the one who refuses to 'grow', i.e. to assume responsibility for the

maintenance of his family. While in the beginning the couple lives in harmony, this is not likely to last.

Last, but not least, the snake is a double symbol of the soul and of the libido, at the same time mythical forefather and civilizing hero, and figure with an important role in the eschatological myths. It is the potential from which all manifestations are born, ruling over the vital principle and over all forces of nature. The human being and the snake are opposed to each other, complementary, rivals. We have in ourselves something of snakes, in that part of ourselves that is least controlled by reason. The snake ensures the stability of the world and is a symbol of fecundity (*cf.* Chevalier, Gheerbrant, vol. 3). It is thus not such a negative presence in the area described as we might think at first sight, standing rather for the savage side of the world and of the human being, a side that we may not welcome, but that we cannot exist without.

While the couple is alone in this Eden, everything goes on well. But things begin to deteriorate when 'intruders' come, and the intruders are actually the couple's children, who provoke a rupture between their parents. Winifred begins to feel afraid for them and this influences her perception of the place where they live. She starts noticing its negative traits – "the adders, the poison-berries, the brook, the marsh, the water that might not be pure" (Lawrence 17) – more than its undeniable, though savage beauty. This is paralleled by a shift in her feelings. Her husband no longer comes first for her, being displaced by the children. Her sense of duty towards them becomes stronger than her love for her husband. Even though she still finds him highly desirable for a while, she resents her passion for him because he does not offer her support in any way, not even as a parent, in educating the girls. Winifred would have liked to have authority over her children, but Egbert does not want to and does not let her either. He lets them do what they want, with the result that their daughters love their father, while their mother is left only to command their behaviour.

Egbert's passivity is obvious not only in that he does not do anything to earn money for his family or to command their respect, but also in that it is his indirect fault that his daughter Joyce is hurt, and that her wound does not heal properly and the family has to move to London.

Symbolic places in *England, My England*. London as a place of torment

London is the place where Winifred's father Godfrey Marshall works hard to support his family. While Crockham Cottage is a world of romance, London represents the real world. Crockham Cottage is Egbert's territory, the apartment in London is Godfrey Marshall's. The father-in-law bought it because he wanted to have his daughter in town with him from time to time.

Actually, neither London itself nor the apartment are described. This may signify the fact that they are not so important. They are seen only as places of torment, both for Joyce herself who has to undergo treatment for her leg,

and for her parents who can no longer live together as husband and wife. This happens because after Joyce is hurt, Winifred kills her passion, considering it guilty for what had happened to her daughter. That may be one reason for which Egbert cannot regard the apartment as his home. It being presented only as "tiny" (Lawrence 10) may also refer to the fact that it cannot house both Winifred, the nurse and the children, and the children's father, responsible for the girl's accident, but also for their incapacity to afford more.

Crockham Cottage as a lost Eden

Under these circumstances, Crockham Cottage becomes like a lost Eden to which the couple would like to return but cannot. Egbert tries both to live there by himself and to restore the previous state of affairs by joining his wife and children on the only occasion when they go there after Joyce's accident. But the house without his family seems to him empty and gives a sense of frustration and futility. His attempts to work in the garden give him no pleasure either. His friends or Winifred's sisters that join him from time to time cannot compensate for her absence. On the other hand, the only time when Winifred herself returns to Crockham with the children and Egbert joins them there is not regarded fondly either. It happens in spring, when the flowers are in bloom and she comes to see them, which might suggest a desire to reunite and a new beginning. But it is not. The weekend spent together with his family is a torment for Egbert, who feels impure and ugly because of the things he has seen since he joined the army and because his wife does her duty to the soldier he has become, not to her man. Consequently, he is glad to return "to the realness and vulgarity of the camp" (Lawrence 30).

Flanders and Egbert's death as the only ending possible

The place in Flanders where Egbert dies seems more reminiscent of Crockham because it is also situated in the countryside. It is a little bushy hillrock outside a village, from which he can see gorse bushes displaying some sparks of yellow flowers. In spite of the flowers, the description connotes the idea of death: it is a cold, wintry afternoon, and the gorse bushes are dark. The place is silent, still, serene, while he himself is quiet, having been emotionally dead for a long time as a matter of fact. He hears the sound of one of the shells falling and exploding not only with his ears, but also with his soul, and notices "a twig of holly with red berries fall like a gift on to the road below" (Lawrence 32). The twig indeed resembles an offering, while its red berries can be associated with drops of blood. The blood that will flood him and out of him when another shell explodes, a "dark bird […] flying home this time" (Lawrence 32). His own blood is not red, but dark, and darkness is what engulfs him before he sees the light. Actual death seems to be the only ending possible for somebody who

apparently refused to become a real, responsible man, who refused to give in to the requirements of the world.

Symbolic places in *The Border Line*. Means of transport, cities, regions, countries. Ways of denoting and connoting death

The Border Line begins with its main character Katherine Farquhar in Paris. She is going to Germany via Strasburg and is supposed to meet her sister and her husband Philip in Baden-Baden. The journey takes her thus from England, where she lives, to Germany, through France. Though the countries she crosses and the cities she goes through are real, the journey acquires the mythical quality of a travel to and through the Nether World due to the fact that along it she will be escorted by the ghost of her first husband Alan Anstruther, who will kill Philip in the end and resume his place near his wife.

England is not much present in the story, as Katherine has already left it. Moreover, we are told that in spite of the fact that she has been married to two Englishmen (or rather Scots) for fifteen years, it has not influenced her very much. Katherine is the daughter of a German Baron and has remained German, though she also has Russian and French ancestors.

Before the actual travel, France is the country where Alan's regiment was sent to fight against his wife's people, and also the country where he went missing in 1915.

A place that is neither a country nor a city but is quite important in the story is the boat taking Katherine across the English Channel. It is there that she seems to feel Alan at her side again and to consider that Alan is still her husband and Philip never existed. It is also there that she starts deluding herself that she is going to meet Alan, not Philip. The fact that the passage occurs "across the cold, wintry Channel" (Lawrence), which clearly connotes the idea of death through both temperature and season, as well as the feeling of Alan's presence makes the boat a sort of Charon's ferry, transporting Katherine across the Styx, to the land of the dead.

Paris is not much described either. We are offered only Katherine's view of it, as a place seeming "intended for Somebody" but inhabited by "nobodies and somebodies" (Lawrence). It brings to her mind Alan, the "red-haired fighting Celt" (Lawrence), son of a Scottish baronet and captain in a Highland regiment, who was not just her husband, but also the father of her two now grown-up children. He was handsome, manly and clever, but haughty and unyielding, which is what brought about their separation after ten years of marriage. Paris is viewed as a city of love, with its inhabitants so eager to serve Katherine because they noticed she was under "the spell of some man" (Lawrence).

After leaving Paris, she will start going through areas that display signs of having seen better days. Though she feels "vaguely excited and almost

happy" (Lawrence) in the train, as if she were going home to Germany or to Alan, at some point, "with a jolt, the wintry landscape realized itself in her consciousness" (Lawrence). The idea of death is not just connoted or suggested by the winter, but also expressed clearly. She sees "ploughed fields of greyish earth that looked as if they were compound of the clay of dead men", "pallid, stark, thin trees" looking like wire, "a ruined farm", "a dismal village […] with smashed houses like rotten teeth" (Lawrence). She realizes this must be the Marne Country, "The border country, where the Latin races and the Germanic neutralize one another into horrid ash" (Lawrence). The idea of total destruction is distinctly conveyed.

Strasburg is the city where she has to spend the night as there is no train over the Rhine till morning. The city is not totally unknown to her, she remembers it from "that other life" (Lawrence), still she cannot find her way about it and she has to ask for directions to the minster. Everything about the place is reminiscent of death. It is a "cold, wintry night" (Lawrence), in which the wind blows icily. "The town seemed empty, as if its spirit had left it" (Lawrence). Katherine crosses another Styx, "the night-dark river" (Lawrence), in which some women are still washing clothes in the grim, cold water, in the dim electric light. Nothing is seen clearly in the darkness, the little light hides rather than reveals things, so Katherine gets lost in a place that should have been familiar.

The cathedral that she goes to see does not connote any of the values that we would associate with a church. It provides no shelter and no comfort. It is an uncanny, demonical place, displaying the colours of blood and death (red and black) and looking like a ghost. It seems to be made of flesh and it is stirring with blood. Far from making Katherine's spirit soar aloft with it as it used to in the past, it appears to her like "some vast silent beast with teeth of stone, waiting, and wondering when to stoop against this pallid humanity" (Lawrence). Gigantic, strange, menacing, it is several times described as a huge creature waiting to crush the human race. It looks heathen and provokes "ancient fear" (Lawrence) to the woman, being identified as "the Thing" (Lawrence), with the capital letter and the definite article suggesting rather the opposite of what the noun denotes. The fact that Alan is waiting for her in the shadow of the cathedral, like a wild animal himself, aloof and authoritative, though gentle, stresses even more the idea that this is a land of the dead.

In the morning, the town is not much different from what it appeared to be during night. The word "cold" is repeatedly used in its description, again suggesting the coldness of death (the town is "stony and cold", the cathedral square "hard and cold", the church "cold and repellent"), while the people who walk around seem dead themselves, being "pale, chilled through, and doomed in some way" (Lawrence).

The train taking Katherine to Germany is again reminiscent of Charon's ferry, transporting its passengers – "a few forlorn souls waiting to cross the Rhine" (Lawrence) – to the Nether World. It is lonely and dismal, creeping slowly and disheartened, going for a while along the Rhine, then crossing it. While the travel along the river may signify a return to the source or a way to Nirvana, depending on whether the passenger goes up or down the river, its crossing is definitely a passage to a different world (*cf.* Chevalier, Gheerbrant, vol. 2). Katherine may be said to experience both types of travels, as the fact that she will be reunited with her first husband will make her reach a state of happiness similar to Nirvana, while that does happen in the Nether World since her husband is still dead. While the character crosses the border, "at last a little sun came out" (Lawrence), standing as a promise of her future fulfilment.

The Rhine plain they get to is frozen, the air seems frozen too, but underneath the ice, the earth seems to vibrate, "strong and barbaric" (Lawrence), transmitting its savage thrill in the air as well. Something preRoman can be felt. Beyond the Rhine, the feeling is even stronger. The overtone of civilization is subdued and the roar of the ancient north starts being heard by Katherine's inner ear, auditory images being thus added to the visual ones. Then, "as if guarding the inner Germany", there are "Black round hills, black with forest, save where white snow-patches of field had been cut out" (Lawrence). Black and white are contrary colours, but with a similar symbolism, connoting non-manifestation, latency and the promise of a new life. While black can suggest absolute death, after which nothing comes, it can also stand for the darkness that precedes creation, for fecundity and primordial virginity. White, on the other hand, is the colour of the departure towards death in the initiation rites, but also the colour of the candidate, of the one changing his/ her function, of revelation and of the state of grace (*cf.* Chevalier, Gheerbrant, vols. 1, 2). All these await Katherine at the end of her journey.

The country that she knows so well seems different, in a state of emptiness, sullenness, and heavy, recoiled waiting for something impending.

Oos is the town where she meets Philip. The town is not described, but it is important because there we get the first sign that something is wrong with Philip, while his wife does not actually seem to care. The husband is pale, ill, defeated and cold, complaining that Germany freezes him on the inside, while Katherine herself has a bright look and feels humiliated to be married to him.

Finally, their destination, Baden-Baden, is the place that offers the background for the ending of the story. It is seen at various moments: during the night, when they arrive, and during the following two days, both in the afternoon and after sunset.

During the night of their arrival, the town is "half-deserted" (Lawrence). Katherine watches it from her room, where she is alone after

having rejected Philip, whose emotion and sentimentality she no longer values, considering them to have no place in Germany. The night seems to her "curiously dark and wolfish", in the "obscurely lighted" little town that is slipping back from civilization into a barbarian past, with the "people moving in the dark […] with the thrill of fear and menace in the wolfish air" (Lawrence). The passage, with the repetition of *wolfish*, foreshadows the moment when Alan will behave like a wolf towards Philip, leaving him in a pool of blood.

During the following day, the weather is sunny and the snow is thin. These would be good omens, but the danger can be still felt lurking. It is suggested by the "heavy, stormy, unbreakable" cold in the air, by the "black, black" woods, with the repetition accentuating the unease, by the extremely tortured little bare vines that Katherine sees at some point. Moreover, the black trees seem "to grow out of unutterably cold depths" and "to be drinking away what warmth of life there was" (Lawrence).

After sunset, she goes with Philip to drink hot water. Besides the moment of the day when this happens, there are again other elements that are indicative of death. The fountain where they go is "obscure", the few people waiting in line are "dark and silent, like dark spirits round a source of steam", while the road they follow to reach the fountain takes them down a "dark hill and between the dark buildings of reddish stone, like the stone of Strasburg Cathedral" (Lawrence). The water is "hot, queer, hellish-tasting", like a water from hell, while the steam rises "ghostly" from the springs (Lawrence). No wonder that Alan appears again, this time not only to silently claim his wife, but to violently get Philip out of his way.

After this happens, in the afternoon of the second day after their arrival, indifferent to her second husband's demise, Katherine goes to walk this time not through the town, but in its surroundings. She climbs uphill past the New Castle, to the Old Castle, an ascension that can be associated with one towards Heaven, leading to getting in touch with the divine figure. The castle is in the middle of nature, surrounded by pine-trees. It is a ruin, broken, silent, with rose-red stone walls, and it is the place where she is joined by Alan. Their reunion takes place against the background of the sunset, the sinking of the sun, "the frozen stillness of the winter afternoon" (Lawrence) and the lonely dark hills again suggesting death. Alan leads her under the "blue trees" and as "he pressed his cold face against her", she feels the wood growing around her and almost devouring her, "crushing her in the last, final ecstasy of submission, squeezing from her the last drop of her passion, like the cold, white berries of the mistletoe on the Tree of Life" (Lawrence). The passage, which represents the ending of the story, is highly symbolic. The mistletoe, "that which heals everything" (Chevalier, Gheerbrant 3: 471, my transl.), is a symbol of regeneration and immortality, while blue, the most immaterial of colours,

dematerializes and makes the real turn into the imaginary. It does not belong to this world, suggesting the idea of a peaceful eternity that is superhuman or non-human (*cf.* Chevalier, Gheerbrant, vol. 1).

Conclusion

In his *The Spirit of Place*, Lawrence noticed that

> Different places on the face of the earth have different vital effluence, different vibration, different chemical exhalation, different polarity with different stars: call it what you like. But the spirit of place is a great reality. (Lawrence 7)

However, in the two short stories under discussion, it is not something inherent to the place that is transmitted to the human being inhabiting or travelling through it, but rather the other way round, the people transmit their own moods and thoughts to the places where they find themselves. It is not the spirit of the place that imbues the human being, but the human being's spirit that permeates the place. Even in *England, My England*, though in the beginning Egbert and Winifred are affected by the spirit of Crockham Cottage, later they try hard to set themselves free and to impose their own spirit on the place.

A second assertion made by Lawrence that drew our attention is:

> Men are free when they are in a living homeland, not when they are straying and breaking away. […] Men are not free when they are doing just what they like. The moment you can do just what you like, there is nothing you care about doing. Men are only free when they are doing what the deepest self likes." (Lawrence 8)

Egbert's symbolic homeland is Crockham Cottage, when he shares it with Winifred. Katherine's homeland is the Nether World where she goes accompanied by her husband's ghost. It is there where they feel free and where they feel themselves. That is why they cannot live anywhere else and with anybody else. The homeland is not the place, but the person one lives with.

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